

## PATENT

### REMARKS:

The courtesy extended to Applicants' undersigned attorney by Examiner Jung-Suk (James) Lee in the office interview of October 14, 2004 is hereby acknowledged, with appreciation.

During the course of the interview, Claims 1, 16 and 20 were discussed. Applicants' attorney proposed amendments to these claims to distinguish from Hilfiker U.S. patent 5,722,799 by defining that the soil reinforcing mats were generally horizontally disposed and of a planar configuration "without upstanding portions at the face of the formation." In response to this proposal, the Examiner disagreed, on the basis that Hilfiker U.S. patent 4,329,089 taught soil reinforcing mats of a generally planar configuration without upstanding portions. Applicants' attorney pointed out that the Hilfiker '089 patent still fell short of the presently claimed invention of Claims 1, 16 and 20 in that the soil reinforcing mats of the '089 patent do not terminate at the face of the formation, "with one of the transverse wires extending across the face." It is through the provision of such transverse wire that the soil reinforcing mats of the present invention retain the face mats against outward displacement. The soil reinforcing mats of the '089 patent do not terminate in a transverse wire extending across the face of the formation. Rather, they are looped and a separate rod (14) is extended through the looped ends to secure the face panels against outward displacement.

At the conclusion of the interview, the Examiner acknowledged that the provision of face mats secured behind the transverse wire welded to the longitudinal wires of the planar reinforcing mats defined over the prior art of record. He also suggested that the foregoing amendments to subparagraph (b) to clarify the structural relationships between the successive face mats.

The foregoing amendments to Claims 1, 16 and 20 conform to those proposed to the Examiner during the course of the October 14, 2004 office interview. The amendments to Claim 16 also incorporate the language suggested by the Examiner to clarify the structural relationships between the successive face mats. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that these claims and the claims dependent thereon (Nos. 2, 3, 4, 8, 11, 21 and 22) clearly distinguish over the cited art.

PATENT

The indefiniteness objections and rejections in the Office Action of August 13, 2004 have been addressed by inserting the word "face" after the word "successive" in the last line of claim 1 and the claims derived from Claim 1. This insertion is not for purposes of distinguishing from the prior art and is in no way intended to further limit the claims.

Allowable Claims 12 to 15 have been preserved, without amendment.

Claims 5, 6, 9, 17, 18, 23, 24 and 25 have been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of their original base claims and any intervening claims. Accordingly, since these claims have been indicated as being allowable as to subject matter, it is respectfully submitted that they are now in condition for allowance. Claims 7, 10, 19, 26 and 27 depend from the claims so rewritten in independent form. Since these dependent claims have been indicated as being allowable as to subject matter and depend upon now independent claims which have been rendered allowable, it is respectfully submitted that these dependent claims are clearly allowable.


For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all claims remaining in the present application are now in condition for allowance, and such action is solicited.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment of any fees associated with this communication to Deposit Account No. 50-0918. A duplicate copy of this document is enclosed for this purpose.

Dated: Oct. 28, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

THELEN REID & PRIEST LLP

By:   
John K. Uilkema  
Reg. No. 20,282

PATENT

Please address all correspondence to:

John K. Uilkema  
Thelen, Reid & Priest LLP  
P.O. Box 190187  
San Francisco, CA 94119-0187  
juilkema@thelenreid.com

415-369-7641 - Direct Dial  
415-369-8789 - Direct Fax

Please refer to our file No. 035105-2

SF #894857 v1